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29 November 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the Director

STATINTL FROM: [redacted]

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation with Washington Star Reporter

STATOTHR

1. Last night (28 November) Henry Bradsher, Washington Star reporter, called me at home to ask about [redacted], whom he heard was investigating China reporting within the Agency. Bradsher was already aware that I was involved in a similar assignment. He said he had been in contact with Mr. Bush's office and was hoping to discuss this project with him soon. I told him, "off the STATOTHR record", that [redacted] was being considered to help undertake an academic review of an Agency study on China reporting and that yes, he would be cleared for classified information. I also added this was no big deal, that it was done frequently in all areas of government; academic consultation and review were regarded as an important way to improve our intelligence techniques. In this instance, with so many changes in Peking, a review was initiated to re-examine our past sources and judgments to help us with China reporting in the future.

2. Bradsher intends to write an article within the next week or two on the "failings" of China watching in recent years, both in government and academic circles. He was the Star's Far East correspondent in Hong Kong for more than six years, reassigned to Washington only last summer. He is particularly vexed over official interpretation of events in China in 1974 when he and some Hong Kong ConGen officers were reporting difficulties and differences in the Chinese leadership which, according to him, were discounted as "overanalyzed". Bradsher feels recent events vindicate the Hong Kong interpretation and he wants to take issue with those who viewed such reporting as "wild and wooly". His argument appears to be mainly with State's policy people and Dick Solomon, formerly NSC's China man.

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3. I have known Bradsher for six years--a year in Saigon, five in Hong Kong and consider him a personal and family friend. We frequently got together to discuss China while [redacted], he has always been witting of my Agency affiliation, but I have never felt he betrayed a trust, or took unfair advantage of our relationship. I also regard him as an astute and enterprising reporter, who takes great pride in doing his own research and analysis.

STATINTL

[redacted]

[redacted]

29 November 1976

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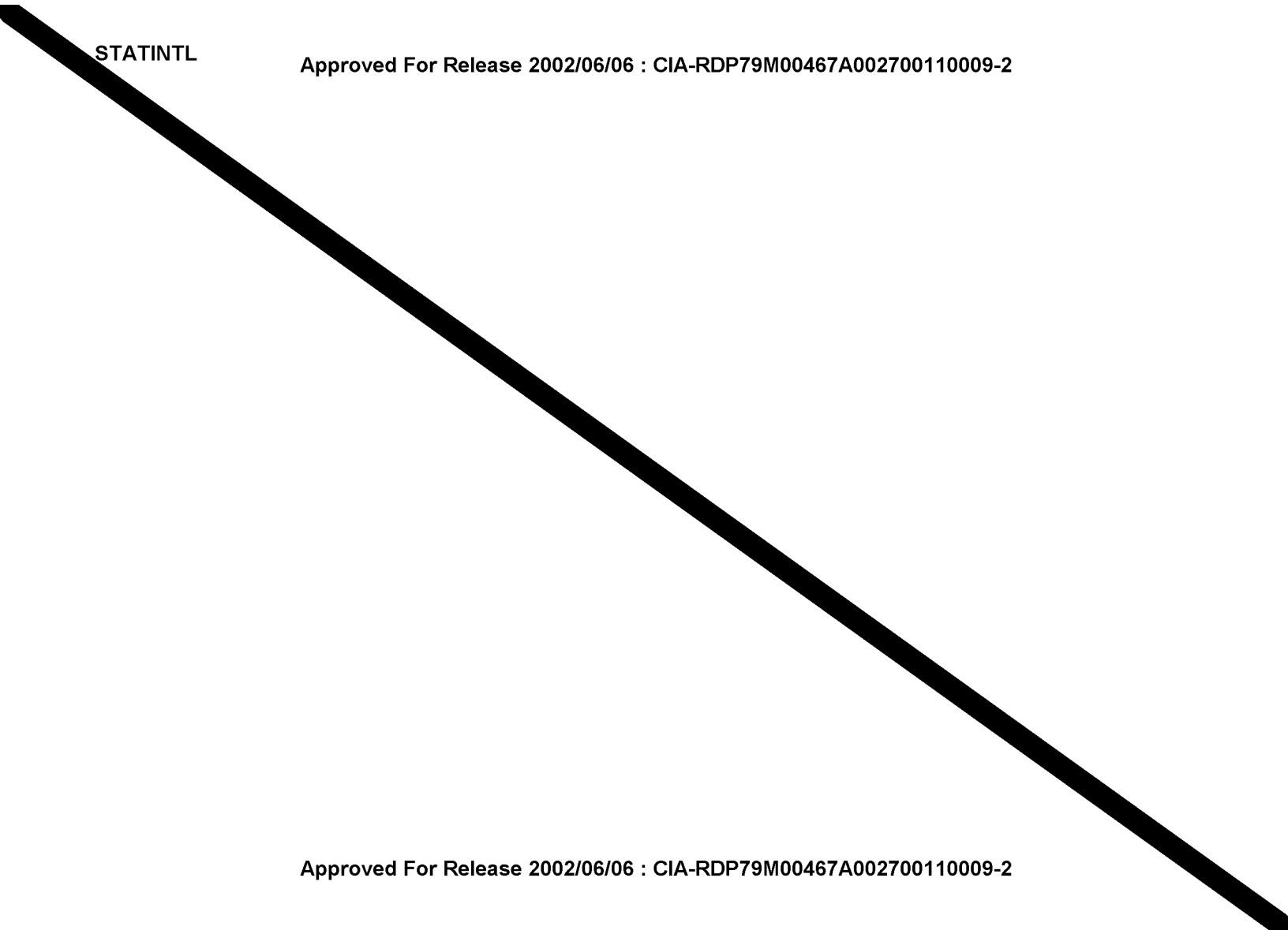

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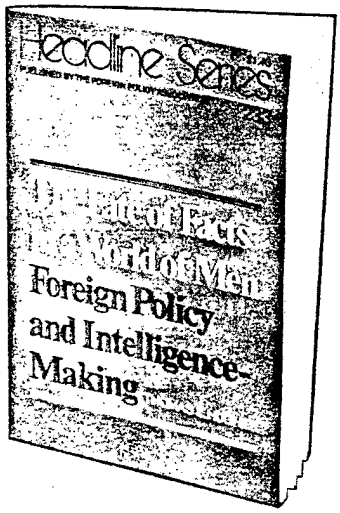

INTELLIGENCE EXPERTS ARE ALL TOO HUMAN, SAYS ONE

Two years of sensational exposures about the abuse and misuse of American intelligence agencies, says Thomas L. Hughes, have produced some useful results -- but have not touched the heart of the problem of how intelligence can best serve U.S. foreign policy. Stressing the vital human factor, Hughes insists on the importance of "recruiting, training, producing and appointing" those key intelligence officials whom he terms "intelligence-makers" -- whose art must be that of "moving between the men of analysis and the men of action ... staying close enough to policy to be relevant, yet far enough away to be objective."

These are among the views set forth in THE FATE OF FACTS IN A WORLD OF MEN: FOREIGN POLICY AND INTELLIGENCE-MAKING, just published in the Foreign Policy Association's Headline Series. The author is well equipped to know his subject. He spent nine years with the State Department's bureau of intelligence and research, six of them as director, and also served on its policy planning staff. He is now president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Hughes' central point: the value of intelligence to the making of foreign policy depends on who. Who are the intelligence officers collecting, screening, analyzing and evaluating the facts? Who are the policymakers acting on them? "No rejuggling of administrative charts can finally surmount the uneven qualities of the men who inhabit the institutions," insists Hughes. "The human material, as much as the institutional framework, will in the end determine whether intelligence and policy, or both, have feet of clay."

A month before the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis, recalls Hughes, a National Intelligence Estimate concluded that the Russians were not likely to place offensive missiles in Cuba. The then Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, privately believed the contrary. McCone turned out to be right--but he himself later admitted that there had been no hard evidence supporting his judgment. This, emphasizes Hughes, points up the key question in intelligence estimating: Whose judgment?

(continued)

Hughes has critical words for both users and producers of official Washington intelligence. To the policymaker, "intelligence" often means data--preferably obtained covertly--which reinforce his ideas. "Interested policymakers," comments Hughes, "quickly learn that intelligence can be used the way a drunk uses a lamppost--for support rather than illumination." But when the facts are not what they want to hear--such as intelligence on body count and enemy force levels during the Vietnam war--their reaction can be all too human: they urge the intelligence men to "get on the team."

As for the intelligence men, Hughes classifies them in three slots. "The butcher" is the purveyor of current intelligence. He cuts a juicy morsel out of context, mixes in a covert source for glamor--and butchers the balance and objectivity of intelligence in the process. Yet he usually wins the daily competition for the policymaker's attention, since he panders to the "succulent taste for the hot poop."

The second type is "the baker," whose product is the intelligence estimate. Uncertainty is his stock in trade. "Since estimating is what you do when you do not know," Hughes reminds us, "it is inherent in a great many situations that after reading the estimate you will still not know."

Third and last is what Hughes calls the "intelligence-maker": the manager and mediator, the controller and coordinator, the supervisor and salesman of intelligence. His job, somewhere between that of office director and sub-Cabinet officer, sets him strategically atop the Washington intelligence pyramid to enjoy an "unrivaled perspective" on policy people--close enough to policy to be relevant, yet far enough away to be objective.

THE FATE OF FACTS IN A WORLD OF MEN: FOREIGN POLICY AND INTELLIGENCE-MAKING is No. 233 of the Headline Series and represents the views of the author, Thomas L. Hughes. This issue is available from the Foreign Policy Association, a national, nonpartisan, educational organization working to develop an informed and articulate public opinion on U.S. foreign policy issues.

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Foreign Policy and Intelligence-Making

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